



## **Burgess Falls State Park History**

The park area was named for Tom Burgess, who was deeded the land in 1793 by the U.S. Government as partial payment for his services in the Revolutionary War.

The Falling Water River played a very important role in the development of the surrounding region. Along this river there once stood a grist mill operated by the Burgess family, which provided meal and flour to many settlers of the region. Also, powered by the river, there stood a sawmill that provided lumber instead of the handsawn lumber that took so long for the settlers to cut.

Probably the most noted industry here was the production of electricity. The City of Cookeville acquired the land in the early 1920's, and constructed a dam and powerhouse in order to produce electricity for the city. In 1928 though, a torrential rain caused the dam to wash out. When the dam broke, the resulting rush of water completely demolished the powerhouse constructed. This new dam and powerhouse produced electricity until 1944, at which time it became obsolete due to TVA's massive new dams and powerhouses.

Today, the Burgess Falls Dam still stands. The character of the area has changed. After many years of neglect and abuse, the area is once again being allowed to return to its proud and natural state.